

Recognizing the Leadership of Coach Bill Snyder

of Kansas State University

by Congressman Jerry Moran

Kansas Day - January 28, 2006

It is a privilege tonight to acknowledge and celebrate a special group of Kansans who make up the very best of what our state has to offer - our servicemen and women. It is their service that safeguards our freedoms and our way of life. Tonight, we express our gratitude to the men and women of our armed forces. We are proud of them and we thank them.

Earlier this month, I was with Kansas troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. I saw how hard our soldiers are working. While not a day goes by that soldiers do not miss their homes and families, they believe in the work they are doing. They believe in their mission and deserve our support.

It is important that we pay tribute to those who have given so much, to those who continue to give, and to those who gave their all in defense of our country. One such soldier is Rep. Lee

Tafanelli. In December, Lee returned home from a year in Iraq, and he recently resumed to his legislative duties in the Kansas House. We welcome Lee home.

Soldiers make enormous sacrifices, as do their families who stand behind them. I have the honor of representing the citizens of Junction City - a military community that knows very well the meaning of being in a soldier's family. Let me share with you letters written by children from the Junction City - Fort Riley area, about their moms and dads serving in the armed forces. These children have an ability to express sentiments that we adults sometimes have trouble expressing.

Emmanuel Cockrell, a fifth grader at Ft. Riley, writes about his dad: "Sometimes I think, 'Why is he in the Army? What can't he have a normal job?' He told me he's proud of serving in the Army. He likes being a soldier; when he wears his uniform, people know he's in the Army, and it makes him feel really proud inside."

Roy Davis, a fifth grader, understands the sacrifices his step-dad serving in Iraq must make. He writes, "I've heard they have no washing machines, dryers, or even dishwashers! I couldn't live without those. They also don't have houses, or beds, to sleep on. Most of all he's sacrificing seeing his family. My step-dad is sacrificing a lot but I know he's doing fine. I really believe in him."

Alyssa Grover, a fourth grader, writes, "I am proud of my dad because he is making

peace in the world. He looks for evil people and his unit captures them. They build houses and schools for the children there. He stops people from fighting and hurting others. He keeps me and my little brother safe and also your family by risking his life for us. That's why my dad is my hero, and I am proud to be his daughter."

These children show their pride, and so should we. I ask every member of the military - active, guard, reserve, and every veteran and military retiree - to stand and receive our applause and gratitude.

Because America is the "home of the brave," the U.S remains the "land of the free," and Kansas continues to be a wonderful home on the range for us all. May God bless our Kansas soldiers, their families, and the country they serve.